

THE ADVOCATE

Spotlight of the Month—DYRS Community Volunteer

Oak Hill Youth Mentor and Mentoring ToDAY volunteer, Alexandra Kline, recently received the National Daily Point of Light Award from the Points of Light Institute for her dedicated commitment to mentoring DYRS youth. She was recognized for her countless hours of continued contact, supportive encouragement, phone calls, in-person meetings in the community, and mentoring her mentee through visits during his incarceration. She also continues to go above and beyond the required hours of mentoring to be an advocate and supportive adult within her mentee's life. Alexandra had previously tutored the Oak Hill youth in another program prior to Mentoring ToDAY, and coincidentally, after she toured the Oak Hill Youth Center, he chose her to be his mentor based on their prior relationship. With passion and dedication to empower DC's at-risk youth, Alexandra Kline is our community volunteer of the month. We thank Alexandra, along with our community partner, Mentoring ToDAY, for providing Oak Hill youth with mentoring and advocacy services to help reintegrate into the DC community. DYRS thanks you for your never ending support to inspire, encourage, and empower our youth into becoming positive role models and self-sustaining adults within their communities. Thank you!



Youth Participate in Absentee Voting Ballot for Elections

by Nicole Lee, Director of Advocacy Education, See Forever Oak Hill Academy

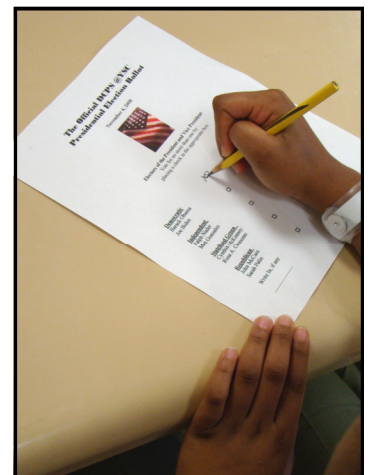


Five youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center participated in a series of onsite voter education sessions. During these sessions, the youth registered to vote, learned about the voting process and participated in the historic 2008 Presidential Election by casting their votes via absentee ballots. As part of ongoing efforts to motivate youth by engaging them in the political process, DYRS and See Forever Oak Hill Academy teamed up with the DC Board of Elections to secure absentee ballots for eligible youth to vote for a presidential candidate and local candidates of their choice. The momentous occasion to vote for our first African American President served as a greater piece to providing civic engagement opportunities to young people at DYRS. Eugene Kinlow, Outreach Director for DC Vote and Chair of DYRS' Advisory Board, briefed Oak Hill youth on the importance of their vote, walked them through the process of filling out an absentee ballot, and thanked them for their commitment to being a part of the process. He also discussed the issue of DC Voting rights, what it means to the District and how the youth can make a difference within their communities through voting and engaging in advocacy opportunities.

Mock Voting Process on Election Day

by Arthur Linder, Principal, DCPS at Youth Services Center

At the Youth Services Center, detained youth participated in exercising their right to vote during the Presidential Election Day. Although it was a mock voting process, both the young men and women were taught the importance of exercising their right to vote and how historical this presidential election was in comparison to previous elections. Youth were able to share the experience of voting on the same day as the entire country, and it gave an air of excitement for the voting process. Similar to the electoral college votes, youth voted for President-Elect Barack Obama and were delighted their votes mimicked the popular vote on election day.



Government of the District of Columbia
Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services